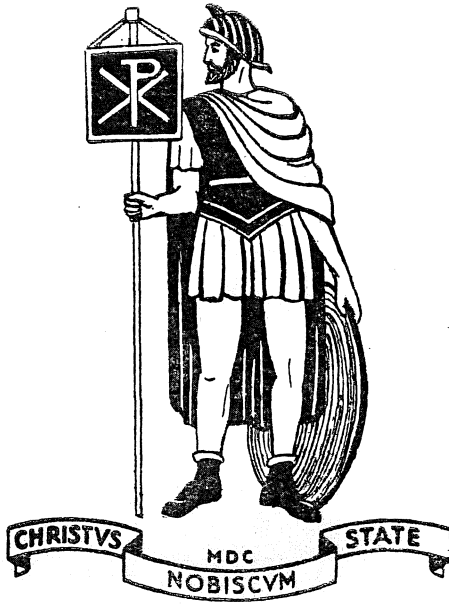


The

Alcester Grammar



School Record

April, 1955

"The Happiest Days of Your Life"



Cast (reading from left to right): G. Birch (*Mr. Sowter*), Elizabeth Manning (*Mrs. Sowter*), P. Russell (*Hopcroft*), Sheila Hall (*Miss Gossage*), G. Keyte (*Mr. Billings*), R. Lewis (*Mr. Bond*), Mary Thomas (*Miss Whitchurch*), T. Bailey (*Rainbow*), D. Careless (*Mr. Tassell*), Linda Croyden (*Miss Harper*), Josephine Lazarus (*Barbara Cahoun*), B. Merris (*Rev. Edward Peck*), Jennifer Burden (*Mrs. Peck*).

Alcester

Grammar School Record

No. 110.

APRIL, 1955.

EDITOR : MR. V. V. DRULLER.

COMMITTEE :

Ann Swinglehurst, Beryl Pope, Davis, Pinfield, Finnemore.

EDITORIAL

Many Old Scholars will have wondered why they did not receive their copies of last term's RECORD until mid-January. But we are sure that they will appreciate our difficulty when we explain the circumstances. The magazines had been printed, delivered to us and made ready for distribution towards the end of term, when the school was seriously disorganised by the influenza epidemic. Almost a third of the pupils were affected and, as we depend so largely on their help for the distribution of magazines, it was quite impossible for us to issue them before the end of term. We had therefore to hold them back until the school reassembled in the New Year. In passing, we should like to point out that this was the first occasion since the RECORD began to appear terminally—over thirty years ago—that we have been unable to distribute it in the term for which it has been compiled.

As readers will realise, the present term, though only of average length, has been a very full one, including as it has done the school play, Speech Day and term examinations. It has also been a very cold term, with more snow than we are accustomed to get in Alcester. Attendance, however, has been well up to normal.

OLD SCHOLARS' GUILD*President: Mrs. M. Feast.***Winter Reunion**

On this occasion the Winter Reunion took the form of a Christmas Party, and was held in the School canteen, by kind permission of the Governors and the Headmaster, on Saturday, December 18th. There was quite a large gathering, and the committee were pleased to welcome a number of Old Scholars who had not previously attended a reunion.

Proceedings opened with a business meeting at 7.30 p.m., when the treasurer and the secretary presented their reports. Then followed the election of Officers and Committee as follows:—

*President: Mrs. M. Feast.**Vice-President: J. Stewart.**Treasurer: Mrs. D. Taylor.**Secretary: H. Canning.**Assistant Secretary: J. Hopkins.**Committee: G. P. Baylis, J. Mahoney, C. Strain, N.*

*Williams, C. Hartwell, L. Hartwell, D. Leadbetter,
T. Savage, V. Stone, F. Highman, H. Feast.*

Thanks were expressed to G. P. Baylis for the valuable services that he had performed as treasurer.

At the close of the business meeting the party commenced. A programme of dancing and games had been arranged, and refreshments were served. During intervals, songs were rendered by J. Gittus and L. Hartwell. A very enjoyable reunion closed at midnight with "Auld Lang Syne" and the Grand Goodnight.

Dance

An Old Scholars' dance is being arranged for Tuesday, April 12th. It will be held in the Town Hall, Alcester, from 8.30 p.m. to 1.0 a.m. Music will be provided by Reg Roberts' Orchestra. Tickets will be five shillings each.

BIRTHS

On July 24th, to Mr. and Mrs. H. T. Lester—a son.

On October 12th, to Mr. and Mrs. R. A. Taylor (née Jacqueline Stewart)—a son.

On November 13th, to Mr. and Mrs. R. Hunt (née Elizabeth Nall)—a daughter.

On December 24th, to Mr. and Mrs. D. G. Clarke (née Betty Francis)—a son.

On February 11th, to Mr. and Mrs. A. G. Ore—a daughter.

On February 22nd, to Mr. and Mrs. S. Stanton (née Mary Boylin)—twin son and daughter.

MARRIAGES

- On November 20th, at Lancaster, Bernard Stevenson to Catherine Farquhar (scholar 1940-45).
- On November 27th, at Coughton, Robert J. Sumner to Josephine L. Findon (scholar 1944-49).
- On December 4th, at Coughton, Edward John Hadwen (scholar 1941-44) to Joan Pavey (scholar 1941-46).
- On December 4th, at Alcester, Derek Roy Payne (scholar 1945-49) to Meryl Eva Tolman (scholar 1941-46).
- On December 23rd, at Handsworth, David Ore (scholar 1938-45) to Anne Jones.
- On February 5th, at Johannesburg, Ronald Walkden to Nancy Dales (scholar 1936-43).
- On February 18th, at Bidford-on-Avon, John Huckvale to Mary Langham (scholar 1945-49).
- On February 26th, at Bidford-on-Avon, George Wood to Josephine Heather Hancox (scholar 1943-48).
- On March 2nd, at Stowe, Buckingham, John Stringer (scholar 1942-49) to Joan Blackwell.

DEATHS

- On January 10th, at Bidford-on-Avon, Edna Kathleen Jones (scholar 1918-21)—aged 49 years.
- On February 22nd, at Astwood Bank, Jerome John Darby (scholar 1941-45)—aged 20 years.

OLD SCHOLARS' NEWS

The recently-published novel by Dorothy Charques (née Taylor), entitled "The Valley", has its setting for a large part in the village of Aynhoe by Anycaster—names strongly reminiscent of Arrow and Alcester.

* * * *

G. V. Adkins, who has an appointment in London, has been playing lacrosse for Middlesex.

* * * *

Jean Finnemore was awarded hockey team colours last season for Battersea Polytechnic College.

* * * *

Patricia Elmore, who is training at University College Hospital, London, has passed Parts 1 and 2 of the Preliminary Examination of the General Nursing Council.

M. Budden, who obtained his B.Sc. (Agriculture) at Leeds University in July, 1953, now has an appointment in Salisbury.

* * * *

R. McCarthy is in the police force at Solihull.

* * * *

Janet Lane has taken a teaching appointment in Australia.

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Pamela Rook, with her father, has been on holiday in England from Australia during the winter. Next term she enters Melbourne University.

* * * *

R. H. Arnold, who for five years has been curate at Basingstoke, has been appointed rector of Hook Norton, Oxfordshire.

* * * *

Valerie Butcher is now in the W.R.A.F.

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In a letter recently received from W. A. Partridge, who is Assistant Bishop of Calcutta, we learn that he is father of a son born in August, 1953.

* * * *

E. Betteridge, who lives in Vancouver, has spent a holiday in Mexico.

* * * *

C. H. Baylis has been appointed principal trade commissioner for the United Kingdom in Bombay. He will represent British commercial interests in that city and the neighbouring states, working with the senior trade commissioner for the whole of India. His rank is the equivalent of that of assistant secretary in the home Civil Service. This appointment is in the first place for a period of three years.

* * * *

A. E. Perkins, Police Superintendent in the Metropolitan Force, who has been at Buckingham Palace as protection officer since 1952 to the Queen Mother, has been appointed protection officer to Her Majesty the Queen. In virtue of this office he will act as personal policeman to the Queen.

* * * *

P. E. Wheeler has lately retired from the command of the Alcester Army Cadets, a position which he has held since the unit was formed six years ago. He has been succeeded by D. Collett.

* * * *

G. T. Colegate is in Venezuela with the Shell-Mex Company.

* * * *

A. T. Bannister has joined the Worcestershire Police Force.

* * * *

P. W. Gowers designed the sets and acted as Technical Director for this season's French plays produced by the Cercle Français of Birmingham University.

SCHOOL REGISTER**VALETE**

*Peace, J. E. (VI.), 1947-54.
Harris, P. F. (V.A), 1950-54.
Goldby, N. G. (V.B), 1950-54.
Rose, P. A. (V.B), 1950-54.

Seeney, P. L. (V.B), 1950-54.
Hobbs, J. M. (IV.B), 1950-54.
Ray, A. D. (III.B), 1952-54.

* Prefect.

SALVETE

Stewart, E. (III.A).

There have been 307 pupils in attendance this term.

AN ALARM CLOCK

For over three years now I have been building a clock, which is at last reaching perfection. It has not always been like this, for during the course of its construction there have been many periodic defects.

The main defect that I had to contend with all started late one night—at about 2 a.m. Before going to bed I started the clock for a time test with the radio, in an effort to get the pendulum the correct length, but during the night its sixteen-pound weight fell four feet to the floor. The result was that the floor was rather badly dented and my sister in the room below was covered with dust out of the beams in the ceiling. This accident also wakened everyone in the house except myself, and I was sleeping in the same room. Nevertheless I heard about it next morning, and I had to assure them that it would not happen again. To back up this promise I placed a pillow and other shock-absorbing materials under the clock, but I am afraid that it fell down several times afterwards, making just as much noise.

Another incident took place one night when I had gone out. The clock had been set to test the chime and striking movements. At nine o'clock it chimed correctly at first, but did not stop. This in turn also set the striking movement going, and so it went on. My sister was wakened up, and everybody rushed upstairs to stop it. That was all very well, but no one knew how to, and so they had to wait several minutes while it chimed two thousand times and struck three hundred o'clock! I also heard about that in no uncertain terms!

I would like to add that besides all these unofficial, wrongly-timed noises the clock has a very effective alarm.

In view of these antics I have "disciplined" the clock so that it expresses its feelings only when required, with the result that peace reigns until . . . the next time.

M. P. FINNEMORE.

" HORROR COMICS "

When the fuss about horror comics first arose, I thought to myself : " Why can't people read just what they like without a lot of bother ? " But of course the question goes much deeper than that, for these publications can seriously affect the well-being of young people. The parents, of course, should try to guide their children to read literature that, if not instructive, is at least harmless. Unfortunately many parents fail in this duty to their children on the excuse that they are too busy or they don't know what the children read. Therefore, every week, children spend their pocket-money on horror comics from the bookstall in their street. These comics portray in bizarre pictures all kinds of violence and destruction, as well as terrifying creatures. The mind of a child who does not have the antidote of a secure and happy family life could easily be poisoned by the horror it imbibes regularly from his comics. A young child, too, could be severely frightened. At the age of sixteen I am still susceptible to such things.

One wet evening I took down a heavy volume called " The Not At Night Omnibus " from one of my uncle's book-shelves, and after being warned : " I shouldn't read that if I were you, " I carried it up to bed with me. Once in bed I began to read. Immediately I wanted to put the book down, but I was compelled to go on by a horrible fascination.

I read about the man eaten alive in a dungeon by hungry rats; the repulsive, eyeless keeper of a lonely moorland inn who murdered the wayfarers in their beds and drank their blood; the mad doctor who kidnapped beautiful girls and transformed them by his brilliant surgery into ugly, living monstrosities which he kept chained in his dark cellar; and about many terror-inspiring animals. By the time I had to put the light out I had broken out in a cold sweat, and it was only by telling myself firmly that these tales were only the morbid inventions of over-imaginative writers that I was able to regain my peace of mind.

What, then, must be the effect on a younger child who is not yet old enough to realise that the things he sees in the picture stories of the horror comics cannot possibly exist? They are a menace to the younger generation, and I heartily agree with the Bill to ban these examples of the opposite of what children should be taught.

BERYL POPE (VI.).

WAITING AT THE DENTIST'S

I always feel much happier when my appointment with the dentist is over. People try to cheer me up by saying : " Oh ! There is nothing to worry about, " or " It will soon be over, " but I am afraid they do not succeed.

The part I really hate is having to wait. When I arrive the receptionist asks the time of my appointment, and very often says: "I am afraid you will have to wait a minute or two, as the dentist's other patient is having more done than was anticipated."

So the receptionist shows me into the waiting-room, and tells me that there are plenty of magazines.

I try to look at a magazine and try to forget about the things I may have to go through when I am sitting in the chair; but no, I keep thinking of the big chair and all the apparatus around it. Then I think of the "drill," which sends shivers down my spine. With the book still on my lap, and open at the same page as it was when I started to look at it, I look up at the clock, which keeps ticking happily away, but goes so slowly that it never seems to move.

The other people with me do not seem to mind anything and are looking at the books quite happily. Then the nurse comes in. Is it for me? Is it my turn to be "tortured"? No, thank goodness! It is for the lady who has an appointment with the other dentist.

I get up and go to the window and look out. I see the people rushing about, some laughing and joking, and some chatting away to friends they have met. All these people look quite happy. How different from poor me, just waiting for my turn! How I wish I were one of those people in the street! Then I hear the voice of my dentist saying good-bye to his patient. The waiting-room door opens, and in he walks. He says: "Oh, hello, Anne; sorry to have kept you waiting. How are you feeling to-day?" I say to myself: "I would be feeling fine if it were not for coming here."

I get into the big chair, open my mouth, and wait to hear what I have got to have done this time; but I need not have worried. He says that my teeth are quite all right. Just a brush-up and I am soon out and walking in the street quite happy like the other people I watched from the waiting-room window.

ANNE BLUCK (V.B).

NOTES AND NEWS

The Spring Term opened on Tuesday, January 11th, and closes on Wednesday, April 6th.

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It is with deep regret that we record the death on November 23rd of Mrs. Wells, widow of Mr. Ernest Wells. We extend our sympathy to their daughters, Janet and Barbara.

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The annual Carol Service was held in Alcester Parish Church on Friday, December 17th.

The Sports Pavilion has now been erected on the school playing field. We hope to include a photograph of it in our next issue.

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A sum of £5 10s. 3d. was collected for Earl Haig's Fund by the sale of poppies in November.

* * * *

The picture for the tidiest form-room last term was awarded to Form IV.B.

* * * *

This term we welcome to the staff Miss A. Pickard, who is taking the Cookery and Needlework classes in succession to Mrs. Collins and Mrs. Bullock, to whom we said good-bye last term.

* * * *

The Dramatic Society party took place on the evening of December 21st, and there were about seventy present.

* * * *

On Thursday, December 16th, a party of scholars attended a lantern lecture in Birmingham on the ascent of Everest, given by Brigadier Sir John Hunt, C.B.E., D.S.O.

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On Wednesday, February 9th, Form I.A. was given a day's holiday to provide room for children taking the entrance examination.

* * * *

On Wednesday, February 16th, a school party, with Mr. McAlister and Miss Morris, attended a matinee performance of "La Cigale chez les Fourmis" (Labiche) and "Le Jeu de l'Amour et du Hasard" (Marivaux), presented by the Cercle Français of Birmingham University.

* * * *

On Friday, January 14th, a party of sixteen from the Fifth Forms, with Mr. Thornton, attended the Midland Institute's Centenary Year Conversazione at Birmingham.

* * * *

At Speech Day, held in Alcester Cinema on Thursday, February 17th, the certificates and prizes were presented by Lady Mills. The address was given by Sir Percy H. Mills, Bt., K.B.E.

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On the evening of February 17th a party, accompanied by Mr. Winter, Mr. Druller, Miss Smith and Miss Nettleton, attended a film display entitled "Focus on Mountaineering" at the Midland Institute, Birmingham.

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This term Mr. W. Head, an art student at Birmingham University, spent a month at school to gain teaching experience. On Friday, February 4th, he conducted a small party round Birmingham Art Gallery.

The school play this year, "The Happiest Days of Your Life," was produced by Miss Young and presented in the Youth Hut on February 10th, 11th and 12th. Further details will be found below.

* * * *

Half term was Monday and Tuesday, February 21st and 22nd.

* * * *

Taking part in the first round of a National Savings "Top of The Form" quiz competition, six members of our school helped the Alcester Rural District team to defeat a team from the Shipston Rural District by 110 points to 92 points at Shipston on Wednesday, February 23rd. They were: Lewis and Marcia Grail (V.A); Downie and Sally Poolton (III.A); and Canning and Elizabeth Coveney (I.A).

THE HAPPIEST DAYS OF OUR LIVES?

Believe it or not, it was our own Headmaster's suggestion that we should produce as our School Play this year the farce by John Dighton, "The Happiest Days of Your Life." "It's a very good play," said he; and it was. "It goes down well with the audience," he promised; and so it did. Just how many headaches and embarrassments it would involve we none of us realised until it was well into production.

As must be widely realised by now, our stage space is very limited, and thirteen people on the set at the same time, all turning on a sixpence, hurling themselves in all directions, and chasing in and out interminably, required split-second rehearsing. We could only pray it would neither rain nor snow, for on more than one occasion this involved tearing out of the Youth Hut by one exit, and speeding as if jet-propelled round the building to the dressing-room entrance on the other side. It was fortunate indeed that at one juncture the text demanded that young Hopcroft should make his entrance with his shirt tails hanging outside his cricket pants, for he never would have had time to complete his dressing, and great was the panic one night when he nearly did not make it, because his tie just would not come undone to commence operations anyway!

Clothing in itself was a terrible problem. Academic gowns were comparatively simple to acquire, but suits for the "men" and dresses for the parents are always a difficulty, and in this play there was the added embarrassment of procuring three gym slips to fit three large boys who were far from willing to wear them once they were found! May we here say a very warm "Thank you" to all those members of our Staff who loaned their own suits, bothered their neighbours, and badgered their friends until the cast was clothed in fitting and suitable garments—"fitting" being indeed the operative word.

Our heartfelt gratitude also to all those members of the school and their parents who so kindly and generously provided our seemingly never-ending list of properties. Between forty and fifty people are involved, and without their timely aid the production would be a sheer impossibility. Admittedly the Property Manager is of the opinion that the Producer expects everyone in the first ten rows to arrive equipped with telescopes, but it is the Producer's opinion that most of them seem to do so, and it was a source of great satisfaction that most of our properties were accurate to the last detail, from O.H.M.S. envelopes officially imported from Education Offices, to sticks of rock purchased on a special visit to Gloucester market. The identity of Aunts Flora, Nora, Dora and Ethel shall remain a well-kept secret, but we were most grateful to Mrs. Gregson for producing our ten-foot scarf on her knitting machine at very short notice, when we had finally decided there was no alternative to the real thing.

It was fortunate also that Miss Gossage's father had a pair of bi-focal spectacles with plain glass in the top lens, or heaven knows what we should have done for her! The greying hair of our older characters must have been reasonably effective, for we were very amused to hear members of the audience discussing how expensive the wigs must have been to be so realistic! We longed to tell them that baby powder is the least costly of our make-up requirements. Rainbow's wig, too, was cheaply produced from cast-off stockinette underclothing, but we guarantee he will remember its elastoplast adhesive to his dying day, to say nothing of the severe haircut it necessitated, that dealt a body-blow to his pride. Our clergyman, however, had obviously the authentic touch, without any inconvenience whatever, for to everyone's glee he asked a group of small boys he met outside why he did not see them in church, and they all began to make earnest and specious excuses! Mr. Sowter, we are sure, is now in good voice for the parade ground, and several of the cast discovered that they rather cared for detached collars, which may make for smarter appearances off-stage in the future.

One of the outstanding features of this production, however, was the team-work, and that applies not only to the cast but also to those members of the Dramatic Society who stood down for the good of the cause. Here we refer to Bolt and Ann Wesson, who not only gave up their parts in January, when it was quite clear that their very bulk was throwing the whole play out of focus, but moreover continued to attend rehearsals until they had trained the new "children" into their roles.

To Ann Swinglehurst, who undertook to deal with the incidental music at the last moment owing to the indisposition of Pat Palmer, and who was faced with very trying circumstances on the Thursday night, our sincere appreciation for remaining so calm, and coping so efficiently; and to Mr. Jenkins, who came to our rescue with a gramophone at the eleventh hour—7.20 p.m. on the opening night to be precise—many, many thanks indeed.

In addition, we must not omit to say a special word in praise of the many hours of hard work that went into the construction of the set. It was undoubtedly, we all agreed, the best yet, and we willingly forgive door-handles that somehow walked off the stage with us when we consider the care taken to give us such a rigid structure, with doors and windows we could really negotiate. Well done, Mr. Hadwen and Mr. Winter. Well done, Finnemore also, for inventing a system by which the curtains worked at the pull of a single cord; and well done everyone backstage for sound effects that improved each night, and were extremely difficult to time.

Finally, may we say how gratifying it was that the tickets sold so easily this year. Unfortunately our expenses were higher than previously, but even so the School Plays have contributed approximately £70 towards the Pavilion Fund over the past two years, and this is no mean achievement. It is heartening to find such ready support for our efforts, and we can only hope that if the days of the productions had not proved the happiest days of your lives, they were at least among the happiest evenings.

WATER BABY

I was spending my holidays on the Bahama Islands, just off the coast of Florida. There the sea is shallow and warm.

It was true! I was to go down into a photosphere and view the world from a different angle—the sea. Often pictures and films of the life going on down there are taken by cameras situated in these underwater carriages.

I boarded the barge, and we began our journey. When the desired spot was reached the rope ladder was let down, and a cameraman, complete with apparatus, descended the waterproof tube into the photosphere. I followed suit slowly, not wishing to fall. As I reached the bottom, a wonderful sight met my eyes. The sun was shining in its full splendour, and the water was crystal-clear and warm. On the sea-bed lay many-coloured corals, gleaming in the shafts of sunlight that filtered through the water. Large clams lay half buried in the soft, white marl. Brightly-hued seaweeds grew in profusion on the sea bed giving the effect of a fantastic fairyland. Some were like fans, many like fingers, and others resembled long pieces of ribbon. The numerous vividly-painted tropical fish darted to and fro among the weeds, rocks and coral.

As I stood gazing at this marvellous scene, an immense fish, called a jew-fish, swam up to the glass and slowly opened its huge mouth. The large, staring eyes seemed to fascinate the small fish, and they swam up towards the strong jaws; whereupon they were seized.

But another excitement lay in store for me, for, not far away, three giant sharks were basking in the warm water. A dead calf was used for a bait, and upon seeing it the sharks turned and lazily stalked it. Their white bellies gleamed, and their wicked fangs were visible in their spacious mouths. Around them flashed small yellow, silver and black striped fish, called pilot-fish. They guided the sharks in deeper and darker water.

A great thrill was yet to be experienced, for a daring native diver, armed only with a sharp knife, volunteered to dive into the water and fight one of these monsters of the sea. At the appointed minute, the diver plunged beneath the waves. He swam towards the largest shark, which seemed to know what was going to happen, for with a lightning flick of its tail it turned and sped open-mouthed towards the diver. I stood rooted to the spot, hardly daring to breathe. The cameraman worked feverishly—but then came the diver's trick. Veering quickly to the side of the monster, he grabbed a fin and plunged the knife deep into the soft flesh . . .

It was all over, and I breathed a sigh of relief, for the diver was standing happily on deck again, relating his tale to an enthralled audience.

I looked through the glass of the photosphere again. Corals gleamed, seaweed waved gently to and fro, and small fish darted here and there. Everywhere was peaceful, and the sun was shining brilliantly. I took one last look at the glory and splendour of the sea-bed, and then turned and climbed up the rope ladder.

Never again do I hope to witness such an awe-inspiring sight, and memories of it will forever remain clear in my mind.

MARCIA GRAIL (V.A).

MOTHER SPRING-CLEANING

The other morning, as the sun was shining, Mother suddenly spotted a number of cobwebs hanging in the corner of the room, which until then had not shown up as the room was dark and gloomy. But now, in the sunlight, they showed up like trailing ropes.

As she saw these, the thought of spring-cleaning immediately entered her head. That did it! Soon she had Dad in from the garage, where he was busy mending a puncture, to help her move the furniture, pictures and so on, into the garden. Having removed everything out of the room, even the carpet, she soon began to scrub the floor. She had not even done half of it when she popped out again into the garage, this time to say that she wanted the room redecorated, and that she was going down town to buy the materials.

"What do I need?"

Dad came in, and, with a knowing look, told her.

Soon she was back, but by 11.30 a.m. there was a proper mess in the lounge, for Dad had mixed the ceilingite and had climbed up the

small pair of step-ladders we possess. But, just as he had started painting the ceiling, he slipped, landing on the floor with the bucket of paint upset all over him and the floor.

Well, you can just imagine the mess he was in! Mum left him to clear up, while she went back down town to buy some more ceilingite, which Dad paid for! By the time Mum had arrived back it was dinner-time, so they got no farther in decorating the room until 2.15 p.m., when, with the help of Mum, Dad managed to paint the ceiling. But Mum wasn't satisfied with just having the ceiling done: she wanted the walls papered as well. So she left Dad and me to do it, while she went outside into the garden and began beating the carpet, the armchairs and the couch.

At 12.30 a.m. we had finished papering the room, Mum had polished the surrounds and had cleaned the windows, and we had got most of the furniture in place. We decided to leave the china cabinet and bureau in the garage until morning, for we all felt that we had had enough spring-cleaning for one day. Dad's goodnight shot was, "No more spring-cleaning till next year, eh, dear?"

PAULINE CHANDLER (IV.A).

DOWNFALL OF THE PEERESS

Where I go for my holidays, in Ireland, my uncle is head gardener of a large estate. On the estate is the three hundred and fifty-year-old country mansion of the Marquis of W. and his mother, Lady W. When I went last summer, preparations for the Marquis's coming-of-age were being made. My aunt had been asked to make decorations for the flower-pots in the dining-hall, and I was helping her.

When we had made them we took them to the dining-hall, and found the Marquis, Lady W. and a lot of young visitors all helping there. The middle part of the floor had been removed for outdoor dancing, and there was a small ledge where the rest of the floor met the middle. While I was standing fixing some flowers, with my back to the others, something made me look round. To my amazement, there was the usually-dignified Lady W. rolling over the floor! (having tripped over the ledge). For a moment I was too amazed to do anything except stare. I could see some of the guests endeavouring to hide their mirth, and I also had to turn back to the table to hide a grin. I am sure Lady W. must have been very embarrassed!

JULIET ROSS (II.A).

OVER-WEIGHTY

We were on holiday at Weston-super-Mare some years ago. We had spent happy days, walking, bathing and swimming in the bathing-pool.

One evening we decided to go to a concert on the pier. We were a little too early, and stopped to look at various machines as we went along. Suddenly we noticed a small crowd around a weighing machine, and when we got closer we discovered it was a robot machine and told people their weight in a loud, gruff voice.

A friend who was with us was very big and heavy and weighed twenty-four stone. We suggested he should try the machine. As he stepped up on to the platform of the machine the people gasped and waited to hear his weight. There was complete silence until our friend said in a booming voice: "Oh dear, I have struck him dumb!"

Everyone around laughed. The machine only weighed up to twenty stone!

GERALDINE DRAYCOTT (I.A).

OUR DOG'S MISHAP

About a year ago our dog did a very upsetting thing. It all happened like this. All four of our family were enjoying an instalment of a serial play on television one Saturday. Mom was sewing when suddenly she announced that she had lost a needle. That started a needle hunt with everyone crawling about on the floor, looking under mats, in cupboards, and every possible place. Our dog, Steve, looked on with great interest and even tried to catch the "mouse" he thought we were hunting; then he resumed chewing an old stocking he had been given. After about a quarter of an hour Steve started to choke, and we could see a piece of cotton hanging from his mouth. The horrible truth hit us. He had swallowed the needle! Dad opened the dog's mouth, but the needle had completely gone.

Soon Dad was trying to telephone a vet and ask his advice. After about six tries he managed to get in touch with one, who said that Steve would choke more and show more signs of it if he had swallowed the needle. If no improvement was found in the morning, however, we were to bring Steve to him. So that night we all went to bed frightened of what we might find in the morning.

On Sunday Steve seemed a little better, so we did not take him to the vet. But on Monday he seemed in pain, and he was taken to the vet, who kept him for an X-ray. The X-ray revealed the needle firmly embedded in the back of his throat. We were told that the needle would either move on, or just stay where it was and a hard covering grow round it. An operation was impossible because the needle was surrounded by blood-vessels, and the throat would bleed badly when cut and the blood would choke the dog. Therefore all we could do was to wait and see what happened.

Now, a year later, Steve shows no ill effects of his escape, although as far as we know the needle is still there. We think he must have chewed the needle down while he was playing with his stocking. He still has his stocking, and loves someone to have a tug-of-war with him.

D. WILSHAW (III.A).



HEAVY INDUSTRY

P. A. DAVIS

OLLA PODRIDA

E.S. states that he was a parasitologist or surgeon.

P.O. tells us that in itself ambition is not a fowl thing.

Should a gentleman remove both gloves before shaking hands with a lady? is the question posed by M.T.

While Jenner was a doctor, he had many people coming to him with small-pox from which they had died, says J.H.

Pharaoh dreamed that certain ears of corn came up on a stork, writes R.M.

THE HUNTER

Everything was peaceful except for the lark singing on the top of a hawthorn hedge. The long grass waved slowly in the cool breeze of the summer evening. The trickle of water in the ditch seemed to babble over the stones to the tune of the lark's song.

Suddenly the grass parted and from the darkest patch of shadow appeared a slim, dark shape which slunk to the water's edge. The lark's song ceased. The stoat turned his head this way and that way, scenting the air furtively. Then the head bowed to the water and took a long drink; then it lifted, scented the air again, and took another drink. The animal then turned and slunk away, its dark coat merging into the shadows as it passed through the long grass. The lark began to sing again, and the tension in the atmosphere was relieved as the hunter disappeared into the darkest shadows.

A. R. JONES (V.B).

PETER

Peter, he's a funny pup.
Pedigree? Well, give it up.
Tony said he's part retriever,
I maintain he's all deceiver.

Once this melancholy cur
Thought he heard a pussy purr.
In the dark this bloodhound keen
Chased a car to Aberdeen.

Now he's claiming Scotch descent,
But, to my astonishment,
I saw Peter's whiskers bristle
When he sat down on a thistle.

B. R. NIXON (IV.A).

EXAMS

Our school exams come twice a year,
When all revise with utmost care,
And hope that when reports appear
They'll show that we have nought to fear.

There's Chemistry first, with Geography next,
But Maths is a subject which gets me vexed;
Its theorems and formulæ I just can't master,
And I always seem to end in disaster.

But then comes the day to take home the book,
And parents give it an anguished look.
Then they mutter with patience sublime,
"Ah, well, dear, better luck next time."

PAT LATHAM (III.A).

CONVERSAZIONE

On arrival at the Midland Institute, despite repeated enquiries about the refreshment room, we were ushered into the "Large Theatre," where a "Cavalcade of Fashion" was shown. Ladies' dresses of the past century were shown, and a rather unexpected piece of entertainment was the noisy disintegration of the spotlight bulb, leaving the later models to grope about in semi-darkness.

As the refreshment room was not immediately visible, our group congregated round a caramel wrapping machine, only to encounter severe competition from other groups intent on the same purpose. The machine worked well, however, and somehow all were eventually satisfied.

Replete with caramels, our group broke up and began to inspect the less profitable but none-the-less interesting exhibits. A "noughts and crosses machine" proved completely invincible, but we "had our own back" on Slinky, a spring which walks down steps. If carefully placed the unfortunate spring completely missed the next step, and, completely baffled, shot down the next steps at lightning speed and finally came to rest, beaten, on the floor. About this time the lure of the refreshment room overcame interest in the exhibits.

Some time later, when we were again wandering round in the region of the caramel machine, the natural history exhibits were discovered. These proved most interesting, and two very helpful gentlemen explained numerous points about the stuffed birds and insects on show.

Other notable exhibits were a demonstration of fly-tying and a reaction-testing car, in which the person to be tested sat facing a screen, showing a busy road junction. At intervals something, or somebody, appeared on the screen, and the time from the appearance until the driver reacted was measured automatically.

There seemed to be many more things to see when it was discovered that it was time to leave. Miraculously, everyone turned up on time, and we departed for the 'bus-stop, where several slot machines were discovered. Here at least sevenpence was lost owing to the difficulty of extracting anything. At last, when more losses seemed imminent, the 'bus arrived, and we immediately shrank as much as possible in order to pay half-fare.

It seemed that the ride would be uneventful when three bibulous and bellicose gentlemen arrived, and an exhilarating encounter ensued. This was terminated by the departure of the trio, who were breathing hostile mutterings into their moustaches.

I am sure that many of us, that night, dreamt of a jumbled mixture of 'buses, birds, cars, stairs, and, of course, caramels.

D. SALE (V.A.)

DOWN THE HILL

One of my most exciting times was the day I rode the Mount. The Mount is a steep hill near Saltdean. One day my friend and I were coming home from school. It was a beautiful day, and we were at the

top of the Mount, from which you could see for miles. Imagining people watching, we started to pedal fast; it was a winding road, and we should not have been up there at all.

At first my friend took the lead and I followed. We narrowly missed killing ourselves by both going different sides of the road. As we neared the bottom we became a bit scared of the rate at which we were going. We became worried because at the bottom of the hill there were some flooded fields. When we reached the bottom, I plunged into the flooded ground and got soaked. My pal, being more adept than I, rode through a gate into a field, where his bicycle struck a stone and turned towards a large haystack. The front wheel hit it, and he was thrown over the handlebars. We went home at a very dignified pace, alarmed by our narrow escapes.

P. RUSSELL (II.B).

EXIT ON WHEELS

This interesting and rather amusing incident happened to my uncle some years ago. When he was a young man in his teens he used to pay a weekly visit to the roller-skating rink. On this particular evening it was rather warm and the management had opened the emergency exit. This opened at the top of about half a dozen steps which led down to the pavement outside.

At this time my uncle was at the beginning of his skating career, and was not exactly an expert. Holding carefully on to the rails, he wended his way round the outer edge of the rink. Suddenly a crowd of skaters came up swiftly behind him and pushed him in front of them down the length of the rink. As they turned at the bottom they left him, and he carried straight on, through the exit, down the steps, and out on to the road.

His hardest job was to convince the cashier at the pay desk that he was not trying to get in for nothing but had really paid and had come out through the exit.

JOHN COLLIER (II.B).

MOTHER'S HAT

When my father ran a youth club down in the South of England he once organised a jumble sale. Among other things which my mother sent was a little hat, which, although past its best, was still quite a model.

On the day of the sale my mother was talking to my father at his office by the Youth Hut, when one of the helpers asked her if she would like to buy a hat. On being shown the hat, she discovered, much to her horror, that it was her own hat, marked at threepence. She naturally did not buy it.

It was adding insult to injury when, at the end of the sale, all of the articles which had not been sold were counted out, and it was found that the hat had not been purchased, even at threepence.

ELIZABETH COVENEY (I.A).

A DAY IN THE SNOW

I was very excited when I woke up on Saturday morning to find snow had fallen during the night and was very deep and icy. After breakfast I called for my friend, and then we had a snowball fight—and what a fight it was! Our hands, which were cold when we started, were soon tingling and we soon felt as warm as toast.

Another friend joined us and suggested we went up the hill with our sledges. I was thrilled to drag mine out of the shed, where it had been idle for so many months. At last our chance had come. We took it in turns to ride down the hill. Near the bottom there was a ridge curving in our tracks, so the sledge had to swerve to avoid the ruts. This caused the riders to roll off into the snow, accompanied by loud laughter.

In the afternoon we remembered a pond in the corner of a field, and we raced off across the snow to see if it was frozen. Very cautiously we tested the ice and found that it would bear us. We had soon made a fine slide, and we spent the afternoon “keeping the pot boiling.”

When a thaw set in the ice began to crack, and with our boots full of water we reluctantly went home.

P. J. LOVELL (I.A).

SIXTH FORM NOTES

This year's Sixth is one of the largest that the School has had for a number of years, and, according to some, the noisiest. Accordingly, the amount of work of the staff has increased. Of the twenty-seven members, all but three are prefects. The new head girl is Pat Palmer, who is evidently maintaining a family tradition. During the Autumn Term, Peace, having taken numerous examinations and days off, departed from our midst, and the new head boy appointed in his place is Davis.

On the sporting side, the Sixth appears quite talented. For a mid-week match, it is surprising how small the classes become. The following boys have played a large part in the success which has come the way of our football XI this term: Peace, Bates, Bailey, Bolt, Baylis, Cleeton, Careless and Miller.

The following girls from the Sixth have appeared in the girls' hockey XI: S. Winspear, F. O'Nions, A. Swinglehurst, A. Lidgely, R. Highman, B. Pope, J. Rawbone and E. Manning. Pamela O'Nions and Ann Swinglehurst were picked to play in hockey trials at Birmingham on November 6th, where they were fairly successful, but, from what we gather, would have been better equipped with swimming suits to play in, owing to the weather.

It may be noticed that the small groups scattered around the form-room are usually divisible by two. It appears that some members of the Sixth prefer to remain at School during the dinner-hour rather than “aller chez lui.” Life in general appears to have settled down to the cave-man style in reverse, as witnessed by a master on one occasion.

Our social activities have been very varied. On the educational side there have been talks by Miss Hazeley, a teacher visiting us from Sierra Leone; and Squadron Leader Pearce, who gave some of the boys a film-show of life in the R.A.F. With members of other Forms, some of our members visited the Arts and Crafts Exhibition held in the Town Hall, Alcester, and those of us who do not play in the School teams went to see the French plays at Birmingham University on February 16th.

A trip was also arranged to the Midland Institute, Birmingham, to see films on the Everest Expedition, and from what we understand a rather hilarious time was had by all—one of our members arriving home at 2.15 a.m.!

Before breaking up for the Christmas holiday, some members of the Sixth attended various parties, and it appears that many had a very enjoyable time. On December 29th the Sixth held their annual party in the dining-hall, and we hope that everyone who attended had an amusing time, although we know for certain that some people were rather needed. (Anyone not understanding this remark report to the Sixth Form, unless you are in the Country Dance Society!).

The talented actors in the Form took part in the School play in February, but most of the praise for the play's success must go to people outside the Sixth Form.

Lately, several second-year Sixth-Formers have appeared with wrinkled brows, due mainly to awaiting interviews at various Universities and Colleges. Now, however, a dark cloud is looming on the horizon—examinations. All members of the Form are now going into hibernation with piles of books. We wish "the best of luck" to everyone else in the School who has to go through the forthcoming ordeal.

P. DAVIS and G. KEYTE.

V.a FORM NOTES

This being our examination year, a silent air of deep concentration has hung over most of the lessons like a wet blanket, broken only by a guttural inquiry and a sibilantly-whispered answer.

Although "work" has been the key word this year, some members have found time for foolish japes, and "Stony Bloke" met his usual fate at Christmas by being tastefully garbed in a girl's scarf, blazer and beret, and having a hockey-stick propped up against his side.

So far this year, several members of our School went on an excursion, led by Mr. Petherbridge, to a talk given by Brigadier Hunt on "The Conquest of Everest," and others attended films on mountaineering. This might give one the impression that this school is an Alpine academy, but nothing could be further from the truth. A small party, whom fortune favoured, were allowed to visit the conversazione at Birmingham University with Mr. Thornton.

Several members of our Form had a part in the School play "The Happiest Days Of Your Life." Lewis was Mr. Pond, Birch was Mr. Souter, Merris played the ecclesiastical part of the Reverend Peck, Jennifer Burden was Mrs. Peck, Muriel Lowe had an easy time as prompter, and Sylvia Bint had a somewhat dubious rôle as a helper of some sort behind the scenes, but no one seems quite sure what she did!

In the sporting field the Form has been represented in the School football team by Pinfield and Lewis; Lewis has also played for the under fifteens, being one of those characters who seem to get old more slowly than others. Among our female members, Ann Holt and Pat Fowler have both represented the School at hockey in the second XI.

N. PINFIELD and M. FINNEMORE.

PRIZE LIST, 1953-54

In addition to the Oxford General Certificate of Education to the successful candidates recorded in last term's magazine, the following presentations were made on Speech Day:—

HEAD BOY'S PRIZE—Peace.

HEAD GIRL'S PRIZE—Ann Palmer.

FORM PRIZES—Form VI (Upper): Paxton, Goward, Bolt i; (Lower): Davis, Cleeton; Form V.A: Beryl Pope, Ann Swinglehurst, Lancaster i; Form V.B: Ann Yeomans; Form IV.A: Ann Freeman, Sylvia Bint; Form IV.B: Joyce Dixon, Barbara Whitehouse; Form III.A: Gwyneth Richards, Jill Burford; Form III.B: Dyke ii; Form II.A: Bailey ii, Jennifer Weaver, Downie; Form II.B: Norma Hemming, Janet Dugmore; Form I.A: Eileen Such, Enid Jenkins, Gillian Clews; Form I.B: Marie Price, Ann Lloyd, Josephine Parton.

PROGRESS PRIZES—Treadgold, Boswell, Helen Pardoe.

SPENCER CUP (for best result in G.C.E.)—Paxton.

MASON CUP (for best pupil in Middle School)—Gwyneth Richards.

SCOUT CUP—Wolf Patrol (Patrol Leader, Merris).

OXFORD EXAMINATIONS FOR GENERAL CERTIFICATE OF EDUCATION

The following pupils, sitting at the Coventry centre, were awarded certificates on the results of the examinations in December:—

Vith FORM

All ordinary level.

P. F. Husband, *Biology*; J. E. Rawbone, *French*;

A. W. Thornton, *Geography*.

BARNARDO HELPERS' LEAGUE

The year 1954 was a record one for A.G.S. branch of the League, and I have received warm expressions of appreciation of its work from Miss Simpson, the secretary at headquarters. With a membership now

standing at over a hundred, our branch sent a total sum of £62 8s. 4d., which was really splendid. Of that amount £16 13s. 3d. was collected as a result of the Christmas Tree Appeal.

I should like to add my own words of thanks to all the members of the branch, and to express appreciation of the promptness with which they (at least most of them!) bring in their boxes for the annual collection in November. I am always very pleased to receive boxes from Old Scholars. Also I am most grateful to those non-members who help by collecting for the special Christmas Tree Fund.

As a result of a film show and talk given by Miss Phillips to boys and girls of the first year, fourteen new members were enrolled. This year short service badges were awarded to: Ann Pinfield, Jean Baylis, Ann Grosvenor, June Webb, Janet Bullock, Eileen Craddock (O.S.) and Anthony Ross, and Rosemary Sharpe is specially to be congratulated on qualifying for a Founder's Award.

H. M. H.

PHOTOGRAPHIC SOCIETY

We have had one lantern lecture so far this term on "Colour Screen Photography," which we found very interesting. Other lectures and demonstrations are to follow.

We have also made good use this term of our club enlarger, from which we have had some reasonably good results. Several of our members have had encouraging results in their experiments in toning.

During this term we are having a contest among our members for the best picture of the new pavilion, which may be published in the School Magazine.

P. F. DAVIS.

THE COUNTRY DANCE SOCIETY

Secretary: S. Winspear. *Treasurer*: A. Lidgey.

Committee: B. Pope, R. Highman, P. Husband.

The highlights of the last term were the two Christmas parties. The Junior one, although it was overcrowded and rather noisy, was enjoyed by all who attended.

At the Senior party the sword dance, "Flamborough," was demonstrated quite successfully and three folk-songs went with a swing. "The Keeper" was sung in two parts, the 2nd and 3rd Formers sang "A-roving," and "Billy Boy" was sung by A. Lidgey. Everybody joined in the singing after a bit of persuasion.

Members' subscriptions have been used to buy several new records, including one of another sword dance, which the Seniors have started to learn under the instruction of Miss Hewitt. We have also learnt several new set dances.

R. M. HIGHMAN.

**A.G.S. PLATOON, 7/11th BATTALION,
ROYAL WARWICKSHIRE REGIMENT, A.C.F.**

This term, training for Parts I. and II. of the Certificate A examination has continued.

In the recent Certificate A Part II. examination, out of twenty-eight candidates from various parts of the county only three were successful, and we are pleased to record that these three successful candidates were all from A.G.S. platoon. Congratulations to Sergt. Miller, Sergt. Davis and Corporal Oseland.

Further successes were the passing of Part I. by Cadets Bennett, Broadley, Stowe and Jones.

Corporal Oseland, Sergt. Davis and Sergt. Miller are now instructors. Corporal Oseland is now training the juniors in Fieldcraft, and Sergt. Miller is instructing them in Map Reading, while Sergt. Davis continues to train the senior squad on the Bren L.M.G.

We have one promotion to report, and it is that Lance-Corporal Oseland is now a Corporal.

SCOUTS

This term we have progressed steadily with the various Scouting tests. On Friday, November 26th, the following Scouts were invested into the world wide Brotherhood of Scouting by Mr. Winter: Hopkins, Lancaster, Meddins and Morrall.

During Troop meetings we have had various competitions. Our knowledge of semaphore has been greatly increased by use in these competitions. While the snow has been on the ground we have been able to study various tracks made by animals and birds. The Scout Cup this year has been won by the Wolf Patrol.

Patrol Leaders A. EDMONDS and B. MERRIS.

FOOTBALL

This term, owing to the adverse weather conditions, three of our matches have been postponed, but new dates were found for two of them, one of which has already been played. The first team has played two matches this term, both of which they drew, and the under-fifteen team has also played two matches, both of which were won by convincing margins. Both teams have quite a few matches arranged for later in the term, and we hope that the weather will be kind to us and allow us to play them all. The following boys, other than those mentioned last term, have played for our two teams—1st XI., Lewis; under-15 XI., Chambers, Dyke (ii).

RESULTS

A.G.S. 1st XI. v. Birmingham University Geog. Dept. (home), drawn, 3—3.
v. Chipping Campden G.S. (away), drawn, 1—1.
A.G.S. Under-15 XI. v. Bidford Secondary Modern School (away), won, 9—1.
v. Alcester C. of E. 1st XI. (home), won, 11—2.

HOCKEY*Captain:* S. Winspear.*Vice-captain:* A. Lidgey.*Secretary:* A. Swinglehurst.

This term practices have been held only in the dinner hours, because the evenings have been too dark, but it is hoped to hold after-school practices soon.

Both teams have been very successful, the first eleven not having lost a match, and both elevens were pleased to record good victories over Worcester and Evesham, even though not at full strength.

During the recent heavy snowfall a very scratch "A" team defeated Ragley Ladies, and the first eleven at Chipping Campden fought a hazardous game in a blizzard.

The 1st XI. has been represented by : M. Scott; A. Lidgey, B. Pope; A. Davis, S. Winspear, J. Dixon; R. Highman, A. Swinglehurst, J. Rawbone, P. O'Nions, J. Bullock; E. Manning, A. Bluck.

The 2nd XI. has been represented by : F. Jackson, E. Manning, A. Grosvenor, A. Holt, M. Norden, J. Holt, P. Fowler, C. Down, J. Burford, A. Bluck, S. Hunt, J. Dugmore, A. Bird.

RESULTS

- A.G.S. 1st XI. v. Redditch C.H.S. (home), drawn, 4—4.
 " v. Worcester G.S. (away), won, 2—0.
 " v. Evesham P.H.G.S. (home), won, 4—1.
 " v. Chipping Campden G.S. (away), drawn, 3—3.
 A.G.S. "A" XI. v. Ragley Ladies (away), won, 4—1.
 A.G.S. 2nd XI. v. Redditch C.H.S. (home), lost, 2—6.
 " v. Worcester G.S. (away), won, 3—2.
 " v. Evesham P.H.G.S. (home), won, 4—1.

S. W.

NETBALL

We have not yet had any matches this term, owing to adverse weather conditions, but we are looking forward to the fixtures against Leamington and Studley College later this term.

J. R.

SUPPLEMENTARY RESULTS

The matches recorded below were played too late in the term to be included in the December magazine.

FOOTBALL

- A.G.S. 1st XI. v. King's Norton G.S. 2nd XI. (away), lost, 2—3.
 A.G.S. Under-15 XI. v. King's Norton G.S. Under-15 XI. (away), lost, 1—4.

HOCKEY

- A.G.S. 1st XI. v. Kingsley School, Leamington (home), won, 5—2.
 " v. Hugh Clopton S.M.S. 1st XI. (home), won, 4—1.
 A.G.S. 2nd XI. v. Hugh Clopton S.M.S. 2nd XI. (home), won, 5—2.

NETBALL

- A.G.S. 1st VII. v. Hugh Clopton S.M.S. 1st VII. (home), lost, 3—10.
 A.G.S. 2nd VII. v. Hugh Clopton S.M.S. 2nd VII. (home), lost, 0—15.